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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June – July 2005****“What Happens if a Dog Bites”**

Each year nearly 5 million people in the U.S. are bitten by dogs. Most of those bites are by dogs we know and interact with on a regular basis. The San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control (ACC) Program would like to remind dog owners the law states that dogs are to be properly contained on one's property, restrained on a leash when going out for walks, and licensed, which requires a rabies vaccination, if they are over four (4) months of age. Abiding by these laws shows you are a responsible pet owner who not only cares about protecting you and your dog, but also your community.

It is also important to enroll your dog in an obedience training class and make sure they are spayed/neutered. Well-behaved dogs are more enjoyable to be around and dogs that are spayed/neutered are much less likely to bite.

If your dog does ever bite someone it is important to make sure the victim receives treatment right away. It is also important to immediately contact your local animal control agency so a report can be filed. Contrary to popular belief, your dog will not automatically be euthanized. Your dog will however, be placed under quarantine (isolation) for ten (10) days so it can be observed for signs of rabies. This can be done at your home if authorities are satisfied with the containment area or it can take place at your local animal shelter. If after the ten (10) days the dog appears to be healthy, then the dog will be released from quarantine and will no longer need to be kept isolated (and can return home). The quarantine period is a safety precaution that allows animal control to contain possible rabies outbreaks. Rabies is a very serious disease that can be fatal to both animals and humans. On the positive side, there has not been an outbreak of rabies in the canine population in this county since 1947.

For more information about how you can prevent dog bites from occurring, please call the San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program's toll free number at 1-800-472-5609 or click on the Dog Bite Prevention Tips icon on the Special Events/News section of ACC's website at [www.sbcounty.gov/acc](http://www.sbcounty.gov/acc). Thank you.

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